

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

Historic name: Rooks County Courthouse

Other name/site number: _____

2. Location

115 North Walnut Street

not for publication

Stockton

vicinity

state Kansas

code KS

county Rooks

code 163

zip code 67669

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this X nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property X meets does not meet the National Register criteria.

I recommend that this property be considered significant _____ nationally X statewide _____ locally.
(_____ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Richard D. Parkhurst
Signature of certifying official

3/15/02
Date

Kansas State Historical Society

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property _____ meets _____ does not meet the National Register criteria.
(_____ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

_____ entered in the National Register.

_____ See continuation sheet

_____ determined eligible for the National Register.

_____ See continuation sheet

_____ determined not eligible for the National Register.

_____ removed from the National Register.

_____ other, (explain:)

Signature of Keeper

Date of Action

Property Name Rooks County CourthouseCounty and State Rooks County, KansasPage 2

5. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	No. of Resources within Property	
<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	contributing	noncontributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u>1</u>	<input type="checkbox"/> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> objects
		<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing:
Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a
multiple property listing.)Historic County Courthouses of KansasNo. of contributing resources previously
listed in the National Register:0

6. Functions or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)GOVERNMENT: County Courthouse

_____Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)GOVERNMENT: County Courthouse

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions.)LATE 19TH AND EARLY 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS: Classical Revival

_____Materials
(Enter categories from instructions.)Foundation STONE: LimestoneWalls STONE: LimestoneRoof OTHER: Composite Material

Other _____

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more
continuation sheets.)

Property Name Rooks County CourthouseCounty and State Rooks County, KansasPage 3**8. Statement of Significance**

Applicable National Register Criteria (Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- ☒ A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☐ B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☒ C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☐ D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations (Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

- ☐ A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- ☐ B removed from its original location.
- ☐ C a birthplace or a grave.
- ☐ D a cemetery.
- ☐ E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- ☐ F a commemorative property.
- ☐ G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions.)ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1921/1924-1950

Significant Dates

N/APOLITICS/GOVERNMENT

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Frank C. Squires, ArchitectCuthbert & Sons, Contractor

Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Property Name Rooks County Courthouse

County and State Rooks County, Kansas

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9. Major Bibliographical References

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- ☐ preliminary determination of individual listing
(36 CFR 67) has been requested
☐ previously listed in the National Register
☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings
Survey # _____
☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering

Primary location of additional data:

- ☒ State Historic Preservation Office
☐ Other State agency
☐ Federal agency
☐ Local government
☐ University
☒ Other

Specify repository:

Library and Archives Division, Kansas
State Historical Society, Topeka,
Kansas; Rooks County Historical Society,
Stockton, Kansas

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property <1

UTM References

1	<u>1/4</u>	<u>4/7/6/4/5/0</u>	<u>4/3/6/5/1/5/0</u>	3	<u>/</u>	<u>/ / / / /</u>	<u>/ / / / /</u>	Zone	Easting
	Northing				Zone	Easting	Northing		
2	<u>/</u>	<u>/ / / / /</u>	<u>/ / / / /</u>	4	<u>/</u>	<u>/ / / / /</u>	<u>/ / / / /</u>		

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Dana Cloud and Sally F. Schwenk

organization Historic Preservation Services, LLC date April 30, 2000

street & number 818 Grand Boulevard, Suite 1150 telephone (816) 221-5133

city or town Kansas City state Missouri zip code 64106

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

Property Owner (Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name Rooks County

street & number 115 North Walnut Street telephone (785) 425-6391

city or town Stockton state KS zip code 67669

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section Number 7 Page 1

Historic County Courthouses of Kansas
Rooks County Courthouse
Stockton, Kansas

DESCRIPTION

The Rooks County Courthouse is a four-story, Classical Revival style masonry building that occupies the northeast corner of a full square block that is north of the Stockton, Kansas historic central business district [Figure 1: *City Plan of Stockton, Kansas*]. With the primary façade facing east onto Walnut Street, the courthouse is rectangular in plan and measures approximately 97 feet wide by 77 feet deep by 45 feet high [Figure 2: *Existing Site Plan*]. The courthouse is Bedford limestone veneer over vitrified brick with dressed Bedford limestone detailing, and has a flat roof characterized by a dentil cornice. A four-story addition to the south façade in c.1974,¹ which houses a handicapped accessible elevator and staircase, is also of Bedford limestone. Except for the replacement of the exterior doors, renovation of the courtroom, and the addition to the south façade, the courthouse has excellent architectural integrity and retains nearly all of its original exterior and interior features [Photographs #1, #2 and #3]. Erected in 1921–1924 as a county courthouse, the structure continues to serve as a county courthouse.

The courthouse has seven bays on the east and west façades, five bays on the north façade, and three bays on the south façade. The three center bays of the north and south façades project to highlight the entrances, whereas the five center bays of the east façade recess to define the entrance. Defining the second- through third-floor central bays are columns and pilasters that rest upon a high ashlar coursed foundation wall. Hexstyle, fluted Ionic columns in antis with pairs of Ionic pilasters define the primary east façade.

The courthouse walls are clad in dressed Bedford limestone, which also define the Ionic columns, door enframements and hoods, cornice, window hoods, and rusticated base. A dentil cornice crowns the flat roof.

The building retains its original metal frame, multi-paned windows. Ground-floor and third-floor fenestration consists of paired casement windows with six lights each. First- and second-floor fenestration consists of paired casement windows with six lights each and transom windows with four lights. The south addition features salvaged original windows [Photograph #1]. The end bays of the first floor at each façade feature window hoods. The addition of several window air-conditioning units somewhat compromises the exterior appearance of the courthouse; however, these are easily reversible elements [Photograph #4].

The center bay of each façade features an entrance to the ground floor of the building. The ground floor is near grade level and approached by two exterior steps. The primary entrance located at the east façade has the words "Rooks County Court House" inscribed beneath the building cornice. Decorative torcheres flank the sidewalk to the primary entrance. The south façade entrance features a handicapped accessible ramp. Paired, metal frame, storefront doors replaced the exterior doors [Photograph #4].

The floor plan and space uses of this courthouse are typical of the majority of Kansas courthouses built during the same time period. A grand staircase [Photograph #9] on the west side of the building, and an elevator and secondary staircase in the south addition provide access to each floor, which has north-south running corridors

¹ Bernice Brown, "Rooks County Courthouse," *Lest We Forget*, Rooks County Historical Society, 1980: 7–8.

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Historic County Courthouses of Kansas
Rooks County Courthouse
Stockton, Kansas

[*Photograph #10*]. The basement, accessed by a staircase at the west entrance, houses the mechanical room. The ground-floor entrances are at grade level, with a handicapped accessible entrance in the south addition. It houses a stairway, elevator, and offices. The first floor offices house the county clerk, register of deeds, treasurer, and appraiser's offices. The second floor houses the courtroom [*Photograph #11*], judge's chambers, and jury room. The main marble staircase also provides access to the fourth floor; however, security at the sheriff's office prohibits public access to the jail on the top floor.

The interior finishes are also typical of the majority of Kansas courthouses built during the same time period. Interior finishes consist of mosaic floor tiles, plaster walls and ceilings, oak doors, and marble wainscoting [*Photographs #8 and #10*]. The marble staircase [*Photograph #9*] and the original light fixtures and sconces also remain intact [*Photograph #10*]. A renovation altered the courtroom with the installation of acoustical ceiling tiles, wall panels, and carpet [*Photograph #11*].

In c.1974, county commissioners ordered the construction of the south addition, which houses a handicapped accessible elevator and staircase. It is four stories in height and extends the width of the courthouse by approximately ten feet. Although large in scale, the addition does not compromise the overall character of the structure as the design and materials are sensitive to the original design of the courthouse. The architects matched the limestone and coursing of the new addition with that of the original courthouse. The cornice of the addition is a simplified version of the original cornice [*Photograph #5*]. The south façade of the addition features salvaged windows from the original south façade of the courthouse.

The Rooks County Courthouse has excellent architectural integrity despite the alterations mentioned above. Paired, metal frame, storefront doors replaced the original exterior doors and an addition altered the south facade; however, the overall exterior appearance is not compromised as the remaining exterior features such as the masonry, multi-paned windows, Ionic columns, and roofline are intact [*Figure 3: c.1926 Photograph of Courthouse*]. All of the interior features, such as the mosaic floor tiles, plaster walls and ceilings, oak doors, marble wainscoting, light fixtures, and marble staircase are also intact. The floor plan configuration of each floor is intact as well. Overall, the Rooks County Courthouse not only has excellent architectural integrity, but it is also in excellent condition as a result of the care and attention given to the maintenance of the structure by a succession of county commissioners.

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
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Historic County Courthouses of Kansas
Rooks County Courthouse
Stockton, Kansas

PHOTO LOG

Photographer: Dana Cloud
Date of Photographs: December 13, 1999
Location of Negatives: Kansas State Historical Society
Cultural Resources Division
6425 S.W. 6th Avenue
Topeka, Kansas 66615-1099

Photo #	Subject	Camera Direction
1.	Exterior of Courthouse	Northwest
2.	Exterior of Courthouse	Southwest
3.	Exterior of Courthouse	Southeast
4.	Detail of North Façade, Side Entrance	South
5.	Detail of Recent South Addition	Northwest
6.	Entablature at East (Main) Façade	West
7.	Sconce on East Façade, Adjacent to Main Entrance	West
8.	Detail of Typical Door, Ground Floor	Northeast
9.	Main Staircase from First to Second Floor	West
10.	Main Corridor on Second Floor	North
11.	Main Courtroom on Second Floor	North

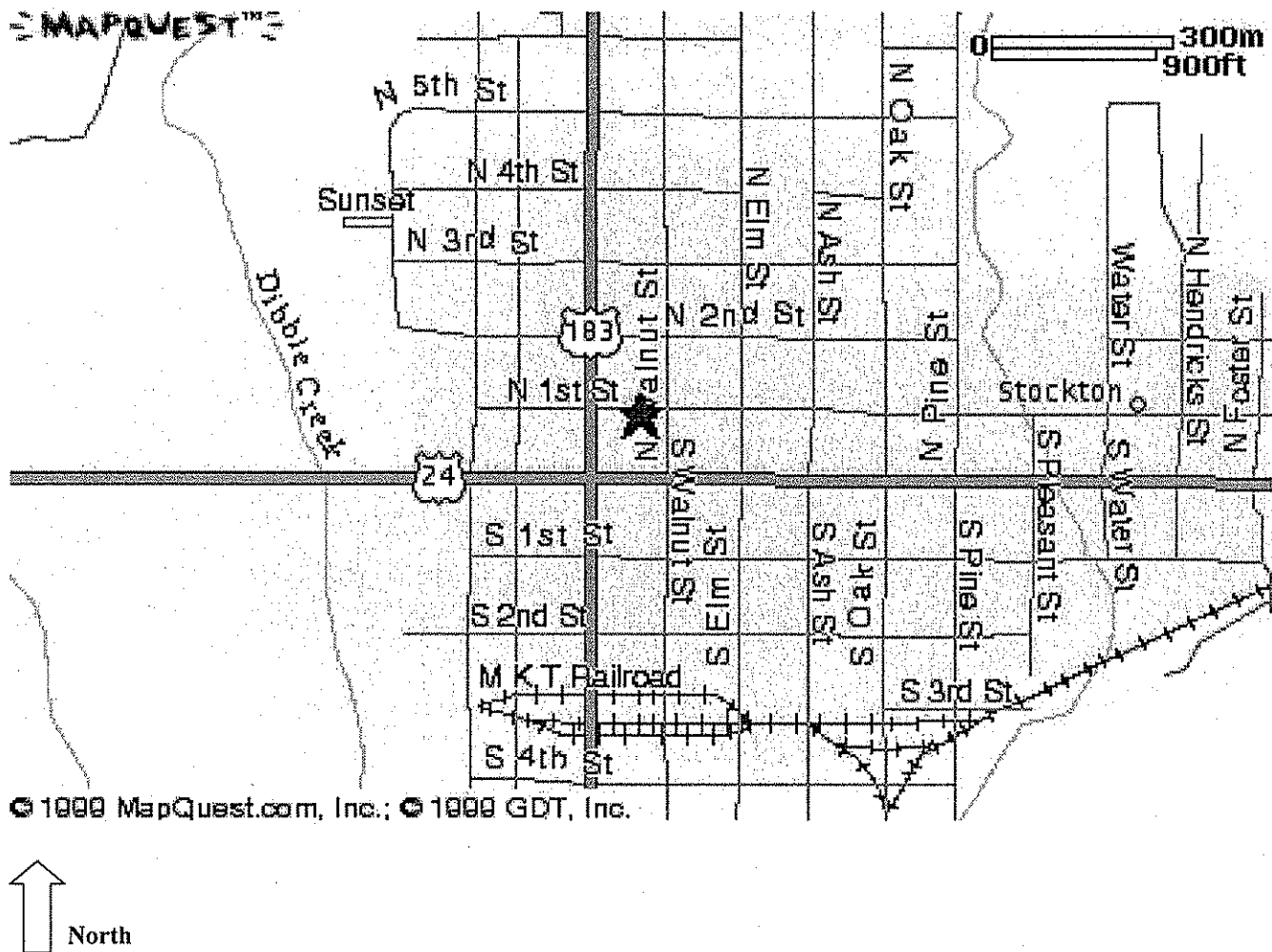
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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
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Historic County Courthouses of Kansas
Rooks County Courthouse
Stockton, Kansas

Figure 1: City Plan of Stockton, Kansas



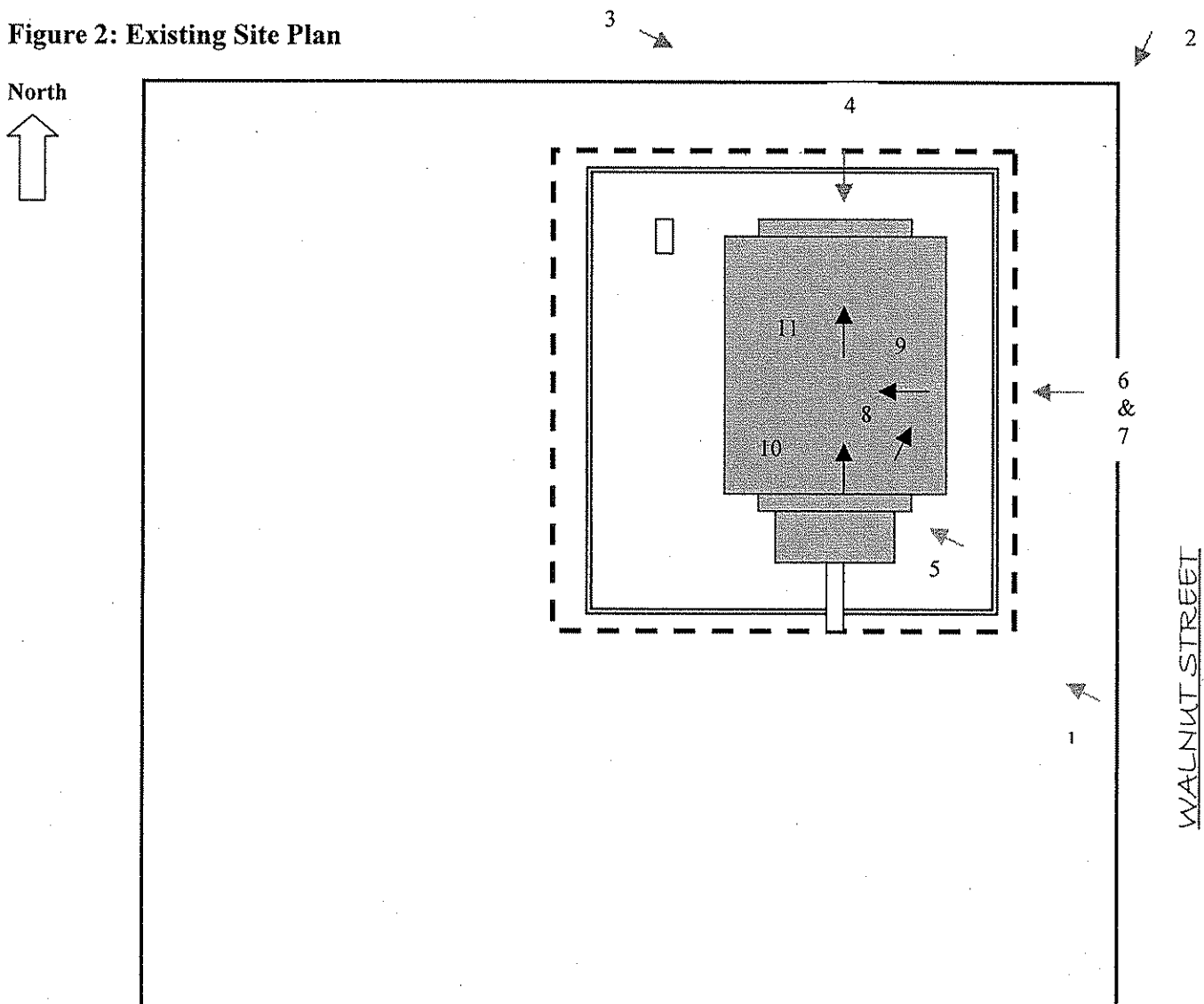
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Historic County Courthouses of Kansas
Rooks County Courthouse
Stockton, Kansas

Figure 2: Existing Site Plan



Approximate Scale: 1" = 60' -0
- - - - Boundary Line

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Historic County Courthouses of Kansas
Rooks County Courthouse
Stockton, Kansas

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Rooks County Courthouse, erected in 1921–1924, is historically significant under National Register Criterion A in the area of **POLITICS/GOVERNMENT** and under Criterion C in the area of **ARCHITECTURE** for its associations with the development of county courthouses in Kansas and as a representative example of Classical Revival courthouse styles popular in the state in the early part of the twentieth century. The historic significance of the Rooks County Courthouse is based on its associations with the history and development of Kansas county courthouses that are documented in the Multiple Property Form, “**Historic County Courthouses of Kansas.**” In particular, the property has direct associations to the historic contexts established in the Multiple Property Form—“The Role of the County Courthouse in Kansas Communities 1856–1950,” “Twentieth Century Kansas County Courthouses and Their Changing Use: 1900–1950,” and the “Architecture of Kansas Courthouses 1861–1950.” The property’s association with the evolution of Kansas county courthouses and their design dates to its construction in 1921–1924 and continues to 2000, the arbitrary 50-year cutoff date for determining eligibility of National Register properties. The property reflects typical courthouse plans, siting, and design found in Kansas after the end of World War I and before the beginning of the Great Depression. In addition to retention of association and location, this property has a high degree of architectural integrity and is a representative example of its property type. The property type and larger historic contexts relating to the significance of the Rooks County Courthouse are fully documented in the Multiple Property Form. The following commentary expands upon these larger contextual themes as they specifically relate to the Rooks County Courthouse and documents the property’s significance.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFICANCE

Rooks County is located in northwestern Kansas, approximately 30 miles from the Kansas-Nebraska state line. It has eight small towns including Stockton, the county seat; Woodston; Webster; Damar; Palco; Zurich; Plainville; and Codell. Located in the northwest portion of the county is the Webster Reservoir and State Park. Highway 24 and State Road 18 run east and west through the county. Highway 183 runs north and south through the middle of the county. Highways 24 and 183 also run through Stockton.

In 1872, the Kansas Legislature approved organization of Rooks County and the governor declared Stockton as the temporary county seat. A building at the corner of Main and Cedar streets housed early courthouse functions and county officers set up offices wherever they could find suitable rooms. In 1881, at a cost of \$5,000—of which the city funded \$3,000 and the county funded \$2,000—the county erected a two-story, Italianate style, stone courthouse in the 600 Block of North Second Street.¹ The county housed early prisoners in the Ellis County Jail until county commissioners secured the funding to erect a jail in Stockton.²

The Italianate style courthouse served the county until 1923, when construction crews completed the current Classical Revival style courthouse. The county had long outgrown its 1881 stone courthouse, despite the addition

¹ Today, the area is residential.

² Bernice Brown, “Rooks County Courthouse,” *Lest We Forget*, Rooks County Historical Society, 1980: 7–8.

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Historic County Courthouses of Kansas
Rooks County Courthouse
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of a wing. F.W. Hagemeister, one of the county commissioners, was the first to lobby for a new courthouse and quickly gained support from other commissioners as well as from the public. The first tax levy toward the building occurred in 1917, and by the time the contract was let the county had accumulated a large amount of the needed sum. The courthouse was completed at a cost for \$314,525.82. This was \$80,000 over the original estimate and required issuing non-interest-bearing warrants.

The architectural firm of Frank C. Squires of Topeka, Kansas designed the courthouse and the construction firm of Cuthbert & Sons of Topeka erected the structure. County commissioners laid the cornerstone on September 8, 1921,³ and shortly thereafter, in 1922, they razed the Italianate style courthouse. The dedication of the new courthouse occurred in April 1923.

In 1974, county commissioners added a four-story addition to the south façade for approximately \$119,000. The addition houses a fire staircase and a handicapped accessible elevator, and features an entrance accessed by a ramp. Architects in the firm of Van Doren, Hazard and Stallings carefully chose Indiana Bedford limestone to match that of the original structure. Subsequently, county commissioners also installed a new heating system and renovated the courtroom.⁴

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

The Rooks County Courthouse is significant under Criterion A as an excellent example of the second and third generation courthouses erected in a wave of new courthouse construction that occurred in the early twentieth century in Kansas. These buildings replaced aged and obsolete courthouse buildings erected in the state's earlier settlement period. The addition of a two-story structure to comply with the Americans With Disabilities Act is sensitive to the original design, and yet it is distinguishable as a modern alteration. The property's architectural integrity and the retention of strong associations to the site enable the property to convey information about its period of construction and the function of county courthouses during this period.

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

The Rooks County Courthouse is architecturally significant as a representative example of Classical Revival style courthouses erected in Kansas after World War I and before the Great Depression. It is the only Kansas county courthouse designed by Frank C. Squires as a single practitioner. Frank C. Squires was a member of the architectural firm of influential Kansas county courthouse architect J.C. Holland. Between 1905–1907, while a member of the firm, Squires participated in the design of four Kansas county courthouses: Marion County (1905–1907), Riley County (1905–1906), Thomas County (1906–1907) and Osborne County (1907–1908) [*Figure 4: Representative Examples of Kansas Courthouses Designed by J.C. Holland & Squires*]. These Richardsonian Romanesque style courthouses are nearly identical in design and feature typical elements of the style such as rusticated limestone bases, hipped roofs, rounded arch windows, clock towers, and arched frontispieces. The Rooks County Courthouse, designed by Squires in 1921, reflects a shift away from the Richardsonian Romanesque style designs executed by Holland and Squires.

³ Letter from Mary E. Fix, Rooks County Clerk, to Jeff Wampler of the State Historical Society, dated 22 March 1979.

⁴ Brown, 8.

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Historic County Courthouses of Kansas
Rooks County Courthouse
Stockton, Kansas

The Rooks County Courthouse is a typical Classical Revival style building featuring identifying elements such as its symmetrical plan, projecting façades, Ionic columns, window enframements and hoods, and a pronounced cornice and parapet. The courthouse retains nearly all of its original exterior and interior features and serves as an excellent example of the Classical Revival style courthouses erected in Kansas during this time. Because of the extensive use of the style for courthouses in the state, it conveys information about the continuum of the style as applied to civic buildings, and the stylistic variations found in the state.

The Rooks County Courthouse is also architecturally significant for its retention of its original floor plan configuration and hierarchy of space that is typical of many early twentieth century Kansas courthouses. Kansas courthouses of this period are generally defined by three or four floors, which have a hierarchy of functions that are located off a main corridor and accessed by one or more staircases. The ground floor is either at grade level or slightly sunken and houses the auxiliary functions such as the boiler room, facility manager's offices, toilets, and storage. The first floor, which is the most highly utilized floor, is generally elevated from grade level. It houses offices frequently utilized by the public such as the county clerk, register of deeds, county treasurer, county engineer, county appraiser and county commissioners' offices. The second floor houses a courtroom, judge's office, jury room, and office of the court clerk. The courtroom is nearly always on the opposite side of the primary entrance, just opposite of the central grand staircase, and is 1½ or two stories in height. The third floor is typically not as obvious from the exterior and is occasionally part of the roofline. The third floor historically housed the jail and sheriff's office, as is the case with the Rooks County Courthouse. The Rooks County Courthouse retains this hierarchy of space.⁵

⁵ In addition to the boiler room, it also houses a number of county agencies.

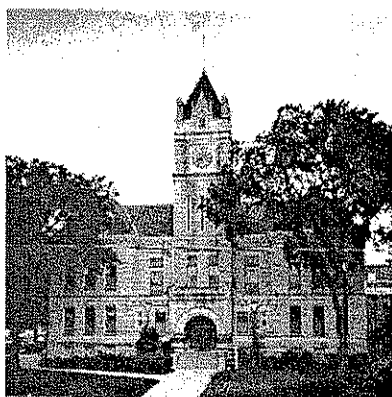
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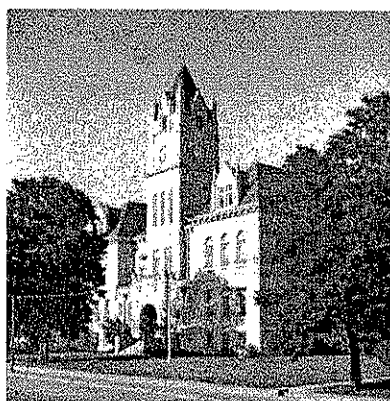
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Historic County Courthouses of Kansas
Rooks County Courthouse
Stockton, Kansas

Figure 4: Representative Examples of Kansas Courthouses Designed by the firm of Holland & Squires



Riley County 1905-1906



Marion County 1905-1907



Thomas County 1906-1907

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Historic County Courthouses of Kansas
Rooks County Courthouse
Stockton, Kansas

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Author Unknown. "Historical Society Tour of Courthouse." Newspaper Article (November 21, 1971).

Brown, Bernice. "Rooks County Courthouse." *Lest We Forget*. Rooks County Historical Society, 1980.

Letter from Mary E. Fix, Rooks County Clerk, to Jeff Wampler of the Kansas State Historical Society, dated March 22, 1979.

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Lots 1-17 odd, Block 5 of North Main Addition, Original Town of Stockton, Rooks County, Kansas

VERBAL BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The nominated property includes the entire parcel historically associated with the courthouse.

14/476450/4365150

